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CINCLANT
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CINCLANT AND USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652 - GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF

SUBJECT: NEAR EAST HIGHLIGHTS - MARCH 28 - APRIL 6

1. ISRAEL: ISRAEL GRANTED \$31 MILLION FOR SOVIET JEWISH IMMIGRANTS - ON APRIL 6, THE DEPARTMENT SIGNED A CONTRACT GRANTING THE UNITED ISRAEL APPEAL \$31 MILLION FOR ASSISTANCE IN RESETTLING SOVIET JEWISH IMMIGRANTS IN ISRAEL. THIS REPRESENTS THE FIRST EXPENDITURE OF THE \$50 MILLION LEGISLATED BY CONGRESS FOR THIS PURPOSE. THE MONEY IS TO BE USED FOR: TRANSIT TO ISRAEL, ABSORPTION CENTERS, A SPECIAL HOSPITAL WING FOR THE IMMIGRANTS, HOUSING, AND LANGUAGE AND/ OR JOB RETRAINING.

2. TAXES DOWN, COST- OF- LIVING DEMANDS UP - EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, THE GOI REDUCED INCOME TAX RATES ABOUT 15 PER CENT. THIS SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR OF REDUCED TAXES IS EXPECTED TO ADD THE EQUIVALENT OF \$95 MILLION TO YEARLY DISPOSABLE INCOME, EMBASSY TEL AVIV REPORTS. ON THE SAME DAY, THE HISTADRUT (LABOR FEDERATION) FORMALLY DEMANDED A SUPPLEMENTARY COST- OF- LIVING ALLOWANCE INCREASE FOR HISTADRUT WORKERS. THIS ACTION FOLLOWED A GOI DECISION MARCH 28 TO INCREASE THE PRICE OF TOBACCO, FUEL, SUGAR, FLOUR AND FROZEN MEAT.

3. EGYPT: SADAT NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW - SADAT' S INTERVIEW WITH ARNAUD DE BORCHGRAVE SURFACED IN THE APRIL 9 NEWS- WEEK. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW DID NOT DIFFER MARKEDLY FROM SADAT' S MARCH 26 SPEECH. IN INTRODUCING THE TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW, DE BORCHGRAVE NOTED DIS- PARAGINGLY THAT FEW WORLD LEADERS COULD MATCH SADAT IN " VERBAL OVERKILL."

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4. SADAT TRIPOLI TRIP FORESHORTENED? - FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT OF " ALL- OUT CONFRONTATION," ACCOMPANIED BY AIR RAID DRILLS AND POWER AND WATER CUT- OFFS TO LEND REALITY, AS WELL AS SOME INCREASE IN GENERAL SECURITY MEASURES, SADAT JOURNEYED TO TRIPOLI APRIL 2. TWO LONG SESSIONS WERE HELD BETWEEN SADAT AND QADHAFI THAT DAY AND SADAT UNEXPECTEDLY RETURNED TO CAIRO AT MIDDAY APRIL

3. SPECULATION HAS ENSUED THAT SADAT' S TRIP WAS CUT SHORT OVER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, SADAT MAY HAVE FELT THAT LINGERING IN TRIPOLI WOULD NOT BE CONSONANT WITH THE URGENCY HE HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO PROJECT RECENTLY.

5. SAUDI ARABIA: SAUDI FINANCIAL AID TO SYRIA - THE SAUDI PRESS HAS ANNOUNCED THAT SAG HAS GIVEN THE SYRIANS A 10 MILLION STERLING (\$24 MILLION) GRANT, AS AGREED UPON DURING THE CAIRO ARAB FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS MEETING, TO STRENGTHEN THE SYRIAN ARMY. THE FACT THAT THIS AID WAS ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY, WHICH IS HIGHLY UNUSUAL FOR THE SAUDIS, REFLECTS A CONSCIOUS SAUDI EFFORT TO ADVERTISE ITS IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH SYRIA AND MAY HAVE BEEN DONE FOR IRAQ' S BENEFIT.

6. KUWAIT/ IRAQ: STATE OF PLAY IN BORDER DISPUTE - THE TENSE SITUATION CAUSED BY IRAQI MILITARY PRESSURE ON KUWAIT' S NORTHERN BORDER REMAINS UNRESOLVED. IRAQI FORCES MAY HAVE WITHDRAWN SOMEWHAT FROM OCCUPIED KUWAITI TERRITORY, BUT THEY REMAIN IN A GOOD POSITION TO RETURN QUICKLY. THIS TOKEN WITHDRAWAL -- IF MAINTAINED -- WOULD FA
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